

FVAP: GIVING SURVIVORS A SECOND CHANCE AT JUSTICE

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A SURVIVOR'S STORY

*A second chance at justice
and protection — in weeks
instead of months.*

→ Our client requested a Domestic Violence Restraining Order (DVRO) against her former partner based on years of alleged abuse, and soon after he filed a DVRO request against her.

→ The trial court granted mutual DVROs without applying a critical law that demands it conduct a careful analysis of dueling requests because mutual DVROs can be less protective and even dangerous for survivors.

→ FVAP represented our client for free in a writ case — and won. The Court of Appeal commanded the trial court to overturn the mutual DVROs, hold a new hearing, and restore our client's temporary protection.

→ With a second chance at justice, our client got what she had been fighting for all along: the protection of a DVRO without the real and serious harms of a wrongly issued mutual restraining order.

*"Thanks to the excellent work of
[FVAP], I was able to recover my
dignity before the law and men*

*[and also] protect the
present and future of my
children."* -Victoria,
Survivor-Client



Pictured: Victoria with Zyreena Choudhry, FVAP WA Staff Attorney

WHAT WE DO

Appellate Courts

Free representation in domestic violence appeals, plus amicus briefs and publication requests that create statewide precedent.

Housing Safety and Justice

Free legal help for survivors securing and maintaining safe housing and employment.

Next Generation

Cultivating the next generation of passionate domestic violence advocates, starting with law students and pro bono attorneys.

Legal Support

Free training and technical assistance for shelters, advocates, and trial attorneys handling domestic violence cases.

Lifeline to Justice

Helping survivors file emergency writ petitions when trial courts get it dangerously wrong.

OUR MAIN PROGRAM: APPELLATE COURTS

Our main program ensures domestic violence laws keep survivors and children safe, by: representing survivors in appeals for free; filing amicus (friend-of-the-court) briefs in cases of statewide importance; and requesting publication of unpublished cases to create binding legal precedent that benefits survivors statewide in California.

APPELLATE COURTS — THE DETAILS

The Work We Do

- ▶ **Free appeals**
 - Restraining order and family law cases, plus other civil matters affecting survivors
 - 12 appeals filed in 2025, with an overall 84% win rate
- ▶ **Amicus briefs**
 - Collaboration with legal aid organizations and other advocates statewide
- ▶ **Publication requests**
 - Daily review of domestic violence-related cases to identify strong publication candidates

How We Do It

- ▶ **Partnering with pro bono attorneys**
 - Free, high-quality representation gives survivors the best chance at success on appeal
- ▶ **Involved from the start**
 - Early case assessment through co-counseling

Collaborative Co-Counseling Relationship

- Legal Resource Library & Case Annotated Compendium
- Pro Bono Manual, and other resources
- Joint appellate strategy and execution
- Oral Argument preparation

LEGAL SUPPORT

We provide free training, legal support, and technical assistance to shelters, domestic violence advocates, and attorneys representing survivors in trial court, including through self-help legal tools and online training videos. This program bridges domestic violence and legal communities by training court personnel and attorneys on domestic violence issues, while training advocates on legal issues.

LIFELINE TO JUSTICE

A writ petition is an emergency request for the appellate court to intervene in a case and command the trial court to either do something or stop doing something that's legally erroneous and harmful. The Lifeline to Justice program helps survivors file emergency writ petitions, building on FVAP's existing models of direct representation, community collaboration and education, and free resources. The program empowers survivors to pursue writ petitions confidently and provides access across California.

LIFELINE TO JUSTICE — THE DETAILS

The Writs Process

- ▶ **Writ petitions are emergency appeals**
 - Relief in weeks, not the months or years a traditional appeal can take
- ▶ **But success is hard to achieve**
 - The standard is discretionary
 - The timeline is fast
 - Often inaccessible to self-represented survivors who may not know this remedy exists

How We Help

- ▶ **How Lifeline to Justice helps**
 - Free representation for survivors in writ cases
 - Technical assistance to attorneys on writ issues
 - Free resources and outreach to raise awareness of writs as a tool for survivors
- ▶ **Powered by pro bono support**
 - Always seeking teams to co-counsel on high-stakes, fast-timeline cases
 - Launched via an Equal Justice Works fellowship; sustained by Manatt, Phelps & Phillips, LLP

NEXT GENERATION

FVAP was co-founded by law students. We know students and young attorneys have the power and creativity to create real, systems-level change. We consistently work to cultivate the next generation of passionate domestic violence advocates.

NEXT GENERATION — THE DETAILS

Our Roots

- ▶ **FVAP was co-founded by law students**
 - Dedication to staying true to our roots
- ▶ **We believe students and young attorneys have the power and creativity to create real, systems-level change**

By the Numbers

- ▶ **Roughly 80+ clerks trained**
- ▶ **Alumni Program rollout**
 - Maintaining strong ties with our clerk alums
- ▶ **Alumni network events**
 - Supporting our next gen advocates and lawyers in the next phases of work

PRO BONO IN ACTION

Adrian Urquhart Winder

Foster Garvey PC • 2024 ABA Pro Bono Publico Award Recipient



"FVAP has been an incredible pro bono partner. They are the only nonprofit organization in California dedicated to helping domestic violence survivors appeal dangerous court decisions... I am thrilled to be able to contribute my appellate skills to their efforts."

PRO BONO -- DIRECT IMPACT

3x

**Pro Bono
Multiplier**

For every 1 FVAP attorney hour, nearly 3 pro bono hours are generated. Your investment multiplies.

237K+

**Cases
Influenced Annually**

Each FVAP-published case impacts an estimated 237,855 California cases annually.

\$7

**return on
Every \$1**

National research shows every \$1 invested in legal aid generates a \$7 return in system-wide value.

84%

Win Rate

Nearly 4x the state average. FVAP's legal excellence speaks for itself.

ATTORNEY PRO BONO OPPORTUNITIES

Why FVAP?

The only nonprofit in California dedicated to appellate advocacy for DV survivors. Your skills — amplified by FVAP's expertise — directly shift outcomes for people who need it most.

"This work has given my law practice additional meaning."

Appeal Analysis

Analyze the record, research legal merits, and memo case strength.

Moot Court

Prep arguing attorneys with tough questions before oral argument.

Amicus Briefs

Draft amicus briefs in high-impact cases with FVAP's support.

Co-Counseling

Lead briefs and oral argument alongside FVAP.

Case Publication

Flag important DV decisions at the CA Court of Appeal for publication.

Legal Research & Writing

Short, scoped memos on discrete legal questions as they arise.

JOIN US TO EMPOWER SURVIVORS

FVAP fights to ensure domestic violence laws do what they're supposed to do — keep survivors safe.

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